

A rapid reaction HRO could have had an impact on the number of internally displaced and refugees. It could have enhanced UN tactics to achieve a sense of security amongst Rwandans so as to reduce the numbers of displaced persons or hasten their return home. The present almost insurmountable barriers to Rwandan reconciliation and rehabilitation would still have been formidable, but with reduced killings and reduced refugee flows, the barriers would have been more resolvable.

There are a number of inherent problems in the UN reacting rapidly to human rights violations even where this involves merely statements or quiet diplomacy. The impediments are even greater for the actual deployment of UN human rights experts, or a substantive and long term operation. The political will of member states, as well as that of the parties to a conflict, will remain the largest barrier to rapid reaction.

In Rwanda, the UN's failure to respond rapidly²⁶ in the area of human rights stemmed in part from an inability to quickly identify sufficient appropriate human rights experts that could rapidly deploy to the field. This was combined with serious UN shortcomings in the provision of administrative and logistics support for even the small number of human rights personnel deployed. These issues will be dealt with in Chapters Six and Eleven respectively.

2.5 Durable Solutions

While human rights can be crucial for the tactical success of day-to-day field operations, they are particularly critical at the strategic level in achieving durable solutions. Quite apart from the inherent value of durable solutions, one of the pressing operational imperatives for any sizable UN operation is how to stand down and go home.

Most certainly in these times of looming UN bankruptcy and fiscal restraint, the reality is that the UN can ill afford large extended field operations. The withdrawal of large UN operations, in particular costly military peace-keeping operations and humanitarian assistance operations, is truly an operational imperative. This has led the UN in the past to opt for narrowly based cease-fires in the often futile hope that the UN could quickly leave and things would somehow sort themselves out. This wishful thinking has invariably resulted in the UN having to return to deal with a situation that has become more intractable and more costly for the UN to help resolve.

In his Agenda for Peace, UN Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali clearly enunciated that "Peacemaking and peace-keeping operations, to be truly successful, must come to include

²⁶ A planned program of genocide was set in motion immediately following the April 6th 1994 plane crash and deaths of Presidents Habyarimana and Ntaryamira. Within 5 days the extent of the genocide was being well enough reported to establish the need for the UN to take immediate action. It was 2 months before the first two UN human rights monitors arrived, another 2 months until two more arrived, and by November (7 months into the crisis) there were only 40 monitors out of a promised 147 (a number never reached even at the peak of the EU team presence in early 1995).